Snohomish Conservation District
2005 Report of Accomplishments

(July 1, 2004 to June 30, 2005)

Most Significant Natural Resource Accomplishment
Cherry Creek Pump Station Retrofit –

A Collaborative Project in the Snohomish/Snoqualmie Basin

In a small watershed near Duvall with abundant salmon and active farms, a creative fix to an aging water control structure now allows fish to find protection during flood events and move freely between Cherry Creek and the watercourses within a drainage district. Commissioners from Drainage District #7 worked with numerous local, state, and federal agencies to update the structure so that fish, including Chinook and Coho salmon, would not be injured or killed by the pumps or be kept out by the tidegates. Rather than remove the old tidegate, which would have left existing farmland vulnerable to heavy spring floods, the group chose to install a self-regulating gate that not only protects farmland, but also allows salmon to safely pass through.

View of the Cherry Creek pump station from the main ditch.

Ryan Bartelheimer, SCD Engineer and project manager, designed the modifications and provided construction oversight. Other partners included Washington Trout, Washington Department of Fish and Wildlife, U.S. Fish and Wildlife, National Marine Fisheries, King County and King Conservation District. These partners, along with Ducks Unlimited, plan to implement other habitat improvements in the 750-acre district.

Mission of the Snohomish Conservation District

Snohomish Conservation District's mission is to work cooperatively with others to promote and encourage conservation and responsible use of natural resources.

Natural Resource Improvements in 2005 - Summary

Natural Resource Improvements include 31 Resource Management plans developed covering 544 acres.

- Three riparian forest buffers were installed protecting 69 acres of premium habitat.
- Eight fencing projects, 7,680 feet in all, were installed in the Snohomish and Stillaguamish watersheds keeping livestock out of critical salmon streams and protecting water quality.
- Two channel stabilization projects covering 2,700 feet now protect severely eroded banks from contributing sediment to salmonid spawning and rearing reaches of two rivers.

Basic Funding

SCD used Basic Funding to leverage funds from Snohomish County, Department of Ecology, USFWS and other sources to secure an annual budget of $1,269,598.

Local Funding – Stillaguamish Clean Water District

SCD receives significant funding annually from Snohomish County through a Clean Water District assessment in the Stillaguamish River basin. This funding resulted in the following:

- **Planning:** There were a total of 54 site visits providing on-the-ground technical assistance to small farm landowners in the Clean Water District. Eleven farm plans were completed. A Stillaguamish horse farm owner was awarded '2004 Small Farm Cooperator of the Year'. Two farms were chosen as 'Merit Farms'.
- **Cost-share projects completed:** Five water quality improvement projects using cost share funds were installed—three heavy use area protection areas and two roof water management systems.
- **Best Management Practice's:** In addition to these projects, approximately 20 BMP's were installed on Clean Water District farms including gutters, downspouts, fencing, and prescribed grazing.

At right is a recently constructed rocked paddock for heavy use area protection. Horses are kept here in the winter and are excluded from grazing pastures, allowing grasses to rest.

Left - A landowner installed this three-bin wooden composting structure as part of his farm plan.

Puget Sound/Water Quality – Watershed Conservation and Habitat Restoration

- One of the habitat restoration projects completed by SCD was a livestock crossing on Boyd Lake Creek, a fish-bearing tributary to the Pilchuck River. This project enables the landowner to graze pastures on both sides of the creek and to drive over the creek without impacting water quality. This project included installing 2000 feet of fencing and planting native trees and shrubs on both sides of the creek. A story about this project was published in the summer 2005 NEXUS.
- Of 4290 contacts made through SCD outreach activities, 37 landowners initiated conservation practices. SCD planners completed five conservation plans and 15 landowners installed 22 BMPs. As a result, 32 acres of riparian habitat and 3 miles of river and stream channel were protected or enhanced.

Professional Engineering

- Livestock access to a salmon-spawning stream was eliminated with the installation of a bridge and a riparian fence.
- Thirty-nine landowners received professional engineering assistance. Ten of those landowners implemented BMPs which enhanced 39 acres of resource lands and nearly a mile of stream.

Conservation Reserve Enhancement Program (CREP)

- SCD enrolled 4.08 miles of buffer along the three major river systems in Snohomish County.
- The CREP program was instrumental in installing 64 acres of buffers on 3 properties. This included planting over 35,000 trees and shrubs. SCD also made contact or began contracts with eight other interested landowners, two of whom are working toward implementation this winter. Several SCD projects were completed using work crews from the Stillaguamish Tribe Banksaver's group, helping to keep installation and maintenance costs down. CREP program totals are 14 projects and 208 acres enrolled.

Livestock/Dairy

- Livestock/Dairy funding was used to assist in the completion of an EQIP-funded waste storage pond spillway for a dairy that enabled the dairy to become certified.
- Planning: There were 35 field visits and 11 follow-up field visits on 18 different farms to deliver technical assistance. Three farm plans were completed, 4 dairy plans were updated, and 1 dairy plan was certified. Farm plans developed covered 87 acres. Dairy plans updated covered 1,044 acres. The certified plan covered 434 acres.
- BMPs: There were 31 BMPs implemented and 32 additional BMPs planned covering over 3,000 acres in categories such as nutrient management, sacrifice areas, prescribed grazing, roof run-off management, waste storage, composting, etc.

Water Quality Implementation and Small Farm Programs

A significant on-the-landscape accomplishment in the small farms program was the completion of a waste storage structure on a farm that was seen as a significant potential water quality improvement. The landowner was under pressure from many regulatory agencies due to a neighbor's complaint.

Snohomish and South County watersheds:

- **Planning:** There were 59 field visits and 16 follow-up field visits on 38 farms. 6 farm plans covering 17 acres were completed.
- **Outreach:** Approximately 12 articles on various small farm-related issues and cooperator highlights were written for the NEXUS.
- **BMP's:** There were 103 BMP's implemented including: 1.25 acres in animal walkways, 750 feet of fencing, 5 acres of forest stand improvement, 20.5 acres of heavy use area protection, 40.5 acres of nutrient management, 6.5 acres of pasture/hayland planting, 27 acres of prescribed grazing, 3 acres of range planting, 22 roof runoff systems, 1300 feet of subsurface drainage, 1 acre of tree/shrub establishment, 2.5 acres of upland wildlife habitat management, 2,650 feet in use exclusion, 9 waste storage facilities, 2.5 acres of waste utilization, and .25 acres of wetland wildlife habitat management.

Camano Island watersheds:

- There were 29 site visits conducted on 22 small farms on Camano Island. A total of 10 farm plans, covering 72 acres, and 2 BMP letters of recommendation, were completed. One small farm workshop was held.

Marketing/Outreach & Education

- **School Presentations on native plants, worm bins, salmon and habitat**
  Americorps Intern Larissa Korhun developed a program to teach area youth about everything from setting up their own worm bin to identifying bugs in the creek. She created ten different lessons and made 43 presentations, reaching approximately 1200 kids. She also participated in Envirothon, WADE, and Salmon Science Camp.